

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. An apparatus for distributing a signal in a stackable unit, comprising:
2 a first input connector of two or more input connectors;
3 a second input connector of two or more input connectors, wherein the first input
4 connector is spaced apart from the second input connector, and the first input
5 connector has a particular spatial relationship to the second input connector;
6 a first output connector of two or more output connectors;
7 a second output connector of two or more output connectors, wherein the first output
8 connector is spaced apart from the second output connector, and the first
9 output connector has the same particular spatial relationship to the second
10 output connector;
11 means for communicatively coupling the first input connector and the second output
12 connector; and
13 means for terminating the first output connector.
- 1 2. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable hub, wherein the
2 two or more output connectors and the two or more input connectors are USB connectors,
3 and wherein each of the two or more output connectors is disposed in a foot of the stackable
4 hub and each of the two or more input connectors is disposed in a top portion of the stackable
5 hub in a position substantially above a particular input connector of the two or more input
6 connectors.
- 1 3. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable expansion module
2 for network attached storage; the two or more output connectors and the two or more input
3 connectors are USB connectors; and each of the two or more output connectors is disposed in
4 a foot of the stackable expansion module and each of the two or more input connectors is
5 disposed in a top portion of the stackable expansion module in a position substantially above
6 a particular input connector of the two or more input connectors.

1 4. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the two or more output connectors comprise three
2 or more output connectors; and wherein the apparatus further comprises a means for
3 terminating a third output connector of the three or more output connectors, wherein the third
4 output connector is spaced apart from both the first output connector and the second output
5 connector.

1 5. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein an aggregate input connector comprises the two or
2 more input connectors; and an aggregate output connector comprises the two or more output
3 connectors.

1 6. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the two or more input connectors are provided as
2 two or more separate connectors and the two or more output connectors are provided as two
3 or more separate connectors.

1 7. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the two or more input connectors is
2 located at one extreme of the apparatus and at least one of the two or more output connectors
3 is located at a corresponding extreme on an opposite portion of the apparatus.

1 8. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable audio component,
2 each of the two or more input connectors is capable of receiving an audio signal.

1 9. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable video component,
2 each of the two or more input connectors is capable of receiving a video signal.

1 10. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each connector of the two or more input
2 connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of
3 transmitting power and the second output connector is terminated by providing no power
4 over the second output connector.

1 11. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable recording device
2 and each connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or
3 more output connectors is capable of transmitting a recordable signal and the means for
4 terminating the second output connector comprises a means for transmitting a particular
5 signal that indicates that the recordable signal is not being transmitted over the second output
6 connector.

1 12. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the second input connector of the two or more
2 input connectors carries a particular signal, wherein the particular signal is a terminating
3 signal and the apparatus further comprises a means for detecting the terminating signal.

1 13. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each connector of the two or more input
2 connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of
3 transmitting two or more signals.

1 14. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a microchip and wherein each
2 connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or more output
3 connectors comprises one or more pins on the microchip.

1 15. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein each connector of the two or more input
2 connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of
3 transmitting a clock signal; and the means for terminating the second output connector
4 comprises sending a signal other than the clock signal over the second output connector.

1 16. An apparatus for distributing a signal in a stackable device comprising:
2 means for providing a first output signal to a first stackable unit through a first output
3 connector of two or more output connectors;

4 means for providing a second output signal to the first stackable unit through a second
5 output connector of two or more output connectors, wherein the first output
6 connector is spaced apart from the second output connector; and
7 means for determining which signal is provided to a particular unit by determining
8 through which connector a particular signal is being provided.

1 17. A method of distributing a signal in a stackable unit, the method comprising the steps
2 of:
3 providing a first input connector of two or more input connectors;
4 providing a second input connector of two or more input connectors, wherein the first
5 input connector is spaced apart from the second input connector, and the first
6 input connector has a particular spatial relationship to the second input
7 connector;
8 providing a first output connector of two or more output connectors;
9 providing a second output connector of two or more output connectors, wherein the
10 first output connector is spaced apart from the second output connector, and
11 the first output connector has the same particular spatial relationship to the
12 second output connector;
13 communicatively coupling the first input connector and the second output connector;
14 and
15 terminating the first output connector.

1 18. A method of distributing a signal in a stackable unit, the method comprising the steps
2 of:
3 providing a first output signal to a first stackable unit through a first output connector
4 of two or more output connectors;
5 providing a second output signal to the first stackable unit through a second output
6 connector of two or more output connectors, wherein the first output
7 connector is spaced apart from the second output connector; and
8 determining which signal is provided to a particular unit by determining through
9 which connector a particular signal is being provided.